

Chairpersons, Ranking Members and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Karen Fischer, from New London. I am opposed to SB 1085. I have worked in the field of prevention of youth substance use for 13 years and prior to that I was a child and family mental health counselor.

I know a teen, I'll call Dave, who started using marijuana to get high when he was 15. He used more and more and then daily, never being clear of its psychoactive effects. He is one of the unfortunate teens who became psychotic with marijuana use and is now living with schizophrenia. Some people think marijuana use is safe. It wasn't for this young man.

I will focus on Prevention. Prevention research finds that in order to decrease youth use of any substance one must:

- 1) Decrease access
- 2) Increase perceptions among youth that the substance is harmful to them.

Legalization of marijuana does the opposite.

Legalization INCREASES access to youth: in their own homes, among their friends and in the homes of their friends, and in their neighborhoods at retail outlets.

Legalization further DECREASES the perception that marijuana is harmful to youth. Kids say "If it's legal, it must be OK." There is a huge amount of positive marijuana messaging in advertising in all media, especially on websites and apps that target youth. And corporations have millions of dollars to spend on enticing more to use their products.

There are also all these new and novel products available to try-vapes, edibles, waxes, etc. Juuling has exploded teen use of nicotine and marijuana products especially in suburban areas. Check out Juuling on your device and see for yourself. Juuling has the potential to wipe out 50 years of progress in drastically reducing youth addiction to nicotine in cigarettes.

Like tobacco and alcohol companies, marijuana corporations realize getting teens hooked on their drugs will mean lifetime customers for them. As Dr. Souza reports, teens are more vulnerable to addiction than adults. And that is why corporations need to market to teens.

States that have legalized marijuana are the top teen marijuana using states in the country. In Colorado teen use is 35% greater than the national average. **Legalization will increase use among CT children and teens.**

Should you legalize marijuana, we would need more money for prevention and treatment, which are woefully underfunded now. But even if you were to set it aside, would we keep it? In Washington state, 50% of promised funding in legalization legislation for prevention and treatment has already disappeared into the general fund. Where is the previously promised CT funding for tobacco, alcohol and gambling prevention and treatment?

If we can't handle CT's needs for substance use prevention and treatment now, legalizing another addictive substance makes absolutely no sense to me.

I ask you to oppose SB 1085.

Karen Fischer, New London

